

March 4, 2011

Transportation Committee Members:

The Municipal Grant Program (MGP) provides funding for a regional Dial-A-Ride program throughout the towns of Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook operated by the Estuary Transit District (ETD). The program currently provides over 4,100 hours of service and 7,000 passenger trips annually, making up 55% of our Dial-A-Ride service.

The Governor's proposed budget will eliminate \$1 million from this \$4 million program. This 25% decrease in funding will have a tremendous impact on the over 700 residents that utilize these services. ETD would be forced to eliminate four hours of service daily, meaning less trip availability and shorter service hours.

This program provides transportation to our most vulnerable residents, the elderly and disabled. 34% of all trips were to adult daycare programs for persons with Alzheimer's or related diseases, 11% for medical purposes, 12% for shopping, and 16% for work. All of these activities are critical for allowing the elderly and disabled to live independently, and any decrease in these services can result in these individuals turning to long term care facilities.

ETD and our member towns support proposed Bill No. 700 restores full funding to the Municipal Grant Program. I urge you to pass this bill and not allow our senior and disabled residents to be the victims of our budget challenges.

Sincerely,

Joseph Comerford  
Executive Director